

FOUR-MINUTE TALKS INTENDENTS

School of Theology at Claremont



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K. L. WEBB

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1926



**MOORE CENTER
CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

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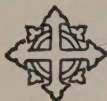
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Four-minute Talks for Superintendents

*Excellent, Also, for Superintendents of Junior and
Intermediate Departments of Graded Schools
and for Leaders of Junior and Inter-
mediate Endeavor Societies*

By K. L. WEBB



THE STANDARD PUBLISHING COMPANY
CINCINNATI, O.

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FOREWORD

THE great and eternal truths of God are found in the little, commonplace things and homely activities of every-day living. It is so now, just as it was in the time of Christ.

People enjoy talking of the things with which they are familiar; consequently, talks that deal intimately and seriously with these commonplaces reach the minds and hearts of the hearers.

Young people particularly desire a concrete statement, direct and personal; therefore, in these semi-object lessons we have used questions that are personal rather than rhetorical.

These "Talks" have been tried out with such success that they here are being passed along.

There is a little place in each Sunday morning program when the Bible-school superintendent feels the need of a snappy little, practical talk of three or four minutes—not on the lesson; the teachers have covered that; but on some other bright, practical, interesting theme.

These talks are equally good for the use of C. E. leaders, or departmental superintendents in a graded school.

THE AUTHOR.

I.

BRIDGES

Gal. 6: 5: "For each man shall bear his own burden."

DO you like to read signs? I do. I saw one the other day which gave me a new idea. This is what it said: "Unsafe for more than a two-ton load." Where do you suppose I saw such a sign as that? I saw it on a bridge.

Why do you suppose such a sign as that was nailed to a bridge?

Yes, the sign was put there to warn the people that the bridge is not very strong, and that they must not try to take too large a load over it, or they might break through and get hurt.

Suppose I had a six-ton load of bricks on a truck and were to come to that two-ton bridge, wanting to cross, what would I do?

That is just it, I would have to go to some place where there was a stronger bridge, or else ford the stream. Why do we build bridges—why not always ford the streams?

Good! Now tell me what bridges are made of. (Steel, stone, concrete, wood.)

Are all bridges the same size? Of course not, but why aren't they?

How many of you have seen a really large bridge? Hands up! Where did you see it?

Each of you tell me one thing that an engineer needs to consider when he plans to build a large bridge. (Traffic, size of loads, width of stream, piling, strain, materials.)

The other day, when I read that sign on the bridge, I said to myself: People's characters are like bridges. Some of them are weak, some of them are strong. Some have such weak characters that they can not be trusted to bear up big loads; they are not safe. They really should have signs on them to warn folks not to trust them too much. Some of their signs should say, "Not safe if we are tempted to lie;" or, "Not to be trusted if we are tempted to steal, or sneak, or cheat, or tattle." You know folks like that—folks who can not be trusted with much—and when you come to one of them you have to go around. That is one reason some people never hold any really worth-while jobs.

On the other hand, there are folks with strong, trustworthy characters which, like big bridges, do not need any sign at all. They can carry any load safely. They would not lie, or steal, or cheat, or sneak, no matter how much they were tempted. They have been like the engineer making a bridge. They have selected the best materials for their characters—in amusement, in work, in companions, in good books and study.

Which are you, a bridge of little character, which must wear a warning sign to keep people from trusting you? Or are you a fine, strong character that needs no sign? One weak timber is enough to make a bridge unsafe. Let us select carefully.

II.

RIVERS

Matt. 16: 12: "Then understood they that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

TO-DAY I shall need the help of every one of you, for our lesson is rather difficult. I really wonder if it is too complicated. But I have decided that you can do almost anything in the way of help, so "here goes."

The subject is "Rivers." The first part of the lesson is easy, but the last part will take real thinking. First, I need to know if you know what a river is. Do you? Hands up, away up! Fine! Then, I need to know some things that rivers are good for. Who knows one? (Wait for suggestions of boating, swimming, irrigation, power, drainage, water supply, etc.) Splendid! Next, how many of you have seen a large river? Hands up! Now, I want you to think of this river that you have seen. I want you to tell me three things about it—its name, whether it is broad or narrow, and whether it is deep or shallow. Who is ready? (Wait for a number to be given, but be sure to get all three facts each time, if you have to repeat your question.)

I see, from what you have said, that all rivers are not the same size and that all broad rivers are not deep. Well, are shallow rivers as good as deep ones?

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If men want to make a river deeper, how do they do it? (Wait for suggestions.)

Now, your lesson is getting harder. Suppose a river spreads out all over everything—what do folks do then? What did they do in Holland when the sea came in? That's it! They built dykes and walls.

Now, suppose all the rivers in the United States were to have a convention—yes, a convention—tomorrow, and decide that they would all cut their banks away and spread out as far as they could. What would happen to this country? Why, of course. There would be water most everywhere. We would not have any deep streams for commerce or power, and if the water stayed spread out we would have marshes and swamps, wouldn't we? Marshes and swamps are full of disease, fevers and different kinds of sickness.

There are some streams that we call streams of thought, which help to carry on the work of the world just as rivers do. Folks are always telling us to be broadminded. Now, here is where we must be careful, for some of the things they want us to do are like the rivers, broad and shallow, while others are broad and deep. A Christian must be careful not to be the shallow kind of thinker. I wonder, sometimes, if we are not getting our streams of thought so broad and so shallow that we are making a swamp or a marsh which will cause misfortune and disaster.

Let us have deep, serious, worth-while thinking. Let us make the rivers of our thought and life to be just the width and just the depth shown us in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

III.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

1 Cor. 12: 17: "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"

SUNDAY after Sunday we have been coming into this building. I wonder who helped to put it here. I wonder how many different kinds of workmen worked on it and how many different kinds of tools they used to build it. Let's count, beginning with the cellar. What kinds of workmen made that? What sorts of tools did they use? Charles, do you have a pencil? Keep count of these, please. Then the foundation—what workmen made that? What tools were used in laying the foundation? Now the side walls and roof—what workmen made them? What were their tools? How about the windows—where did they come from? I see that this room is plastered—who did that? What tools were used? The painting and decorating—what kinds of tools were needed for that work? The organ and the seats and the carpet were ordered from factories, I suppose. How many tools have you on your list, Charles?

Tell me—could the man who painted this church have done his work with the tools of the man who dug the cellar? Could the man who made the roof have used the same tools as the man who put on the plas-

ter? No! And we had to send away for the seats and the organ and the carpet, because we could not make them here.

What about that part of the church which is more important than the church building? I mean the *people*. Really, the people are the church, and the same thing may be said of us that we say of the building. People are all different in ability, and it takes many different kinds of ability to make our church work go. We need some good thinkers to keep us headed in the right direction. We need some good musicians and able singers for our music. We need some good mixers, some good talkers, some good listeners, some hard workers. Now, what is your particular ability—your talent? The church needs it.

Then, too, there are some things that we do not make here, so we have to order them from God's factory. Salvation from sin comes from God. So do our rewards for right living come from Him. All of us should do our best with the abilities we have, and ask the blessings of God upon us as we build.

IV.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

John 9: 4: "We must work the works of him that sent me."

SOME years ago, when I was a boy, I ran a lemonade-stand. There were some boxes, a few glasses, an old pitcher and some lemonade. Most of us have either run such a stand or played store at some time or other. I want to remind you that we are running a store now, here. Yes, we are! It is a big business too. Our building is this church. What do you suppose it cost, with its fixtures, seats, lights, furnace, carpets, clocks, song-books, piano and organ? (Wait for answer.) What does it cost per year to run it? (Secure estimate.) That is quite a sum of money. If I were putting that much money of my own into a business, I should want to know that it was going to do something.

We have many salesmen and clerks. You who belong to this school are all salesmen and clerks. But, by the way, what are we selling? (Wait for suggestions; as, religion, friendliness, helpfulness, purity.) Surely we are, and the customers are the people who live in this community.

Our church has one thing to furnish to the public which every one in the world wants. Yes, every one wants to know God. If I were to advertise in the paper—and people knew it to be true—that in this

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church they could see God, actually see Him, this place would be packed and jammed more than any bargain-counter you ever saw. This church of ours should be showing God to the people of the community—we should be showing Him in our lives and in what we say—so the people will want Him in their own lives and homes. Business men call this salesmanship.

You know that it is bad for a firm to have even one poor clerk—one that is grouchy, or lazy, or makes mistakes, or has dirty hands. It is just as bad for a church to have that kind of a salesman. We have a big investment here in character, money, time and energy. Let's be open for business, God's business, all the year round. Remember, we don't find dry goods sold in garages, or fruit sold in a hardware-store; so we must not offer here anything for the public that is not godly and clean and right. People have a right to find God. They should find Him on the shelves of our hearts, where godliness may be found "without money and without price."

Our lives are open for God's business all the time. Let us carry no useless side lines.

V.

THE MUSIC-STORE

1 Cor. 7: 7: "Howbeit each man hath his own gift from God."

I LIKE music; I like to hear all of you sing. Yes, I do! I like to whistle too. How many of you can whistle? Hands up. Fine! I like to go into music-stores where they have many different instruments—pianos, saxophones, trombones, cornets, drums, violins, a banjo or two, some flutes, and a number of queer instruments of which I do not even know the name.

One time one of the clerks was playing the violin. As I watched him, I thought, "That looks easy." When he laid the violin down, I picked it up and drew the bow across the strings. My! it was awful. You can imagine how it screeched. I hurried to put it down before the clerk put me out of the store. I walked on a little farther where there was a cornet like Don here plays. I thought, "Here is something easy. All you have to do is to blow on this." So I blew, but all I got was a few squawks.

What do you suppose was the matter with that cornet and that violin? (Wait for suggestions.)

So the trouble was with me, was it? How does it happen that an old person like me does not know how to do what a young chap like Don can do? (Wait for answer.) No, I have never learned to play, so I can not get music out of a violin or a cornet. It

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was not the instrument—it was I. I didn't know how.

But suppose I want to learn to play; can I learn?

What must I do? (Get a teacher, practice, study, etc.)

But if I get a teacher, do I have to practice?

Yes, you are exactly right, I do.

I want you to think with me, just for a moment, about life as a great musical instrument we all must play. Many, many folks don't know how to get music out of it, so they find fault with life itself, or with God, when they should blame themselves. It is neither life nor God that is to blame if we get no music. It is you and I.

If we want to get music out of life, we must have a teacher, and the world's great life teacher is Jesus Christ. He gives us our lessons, but we must practice, practice, practice.

Are you getting music out of life? If so, what kind of music is it? Some people are playing only jazz. Is Christ your Teacher? Do you practice?

VI.

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE

Ps. 145: 12: "To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts."

I BOUGHT a magazine the other day, and just about two-thirds of it consisted of printed pages which were not stories, not discussions, not news; but these pages told me what wonderful soap I can buy somewhere; what dependable tires certain tires are; what tooth-paste will make my teeth the finest ever; what breakfast food will make a giant out of me.

I put that magazine down, and picked up the daily paper, and there it was again—Smiths sell wonderful dresses; Brown's shoes are for tired feet; Jones has fresh country eggs. I also found another page—one not duplicated in the magazine—which said: "Wanted—Mechanics;" "Lost—A black silk bag;" "Strayed or Stolen—A Boston bull pup." What do we call these things? (Advertisements.) Do the papers and magazines print all of these advertisements free? Why do people spend money to advertise? (Wait for suggestion.)

Well, if it pays a business man, I wonder whether we could follow his example? What do we have in this church that is worth advertising? If you were to start a headline advertisement for us, what would you select—our singing, our orchestra, our good fel-

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lowship, our efficiency, our boys and girls, our teachers, our cordiality—what?

I wonder, too, what we would have on that “Want” page! Would it be, “Lost—Fifteen minutes every Sunday morning,” or “Wanted—Workers,” or “Strayed—Our enthusiasm,” or could we advertise, “Found—A way to better living,” or “Exchange—For your spare time a chance for greater development,” or “Free—A bit of encouragement and a cure for the blues”?

You know you can advertise only what you have in stock. It is poor business, very poor business, to advertise what you don't have and then try to substitute something else.

Let us think the subject over seriously this week to see what we have in stock that we could advertise to the community. Maybe people will want more to do with us.

VII.

EASY MONEY

Prov. 10: 4: "He becometh poor that worketh with a slack hand."

EVERY once in awhile I hear folks say something about "easy money." Did you ever hear any one say that?

What do they mean when they say it? (Wait for a few answers.)

Is there a difference between "easy money" and "lots of money"? There is. Well, what are some of the ways by which people get this "easy money"? (Wait for suggestions; as, in oil stock, gold bricks, stealing, lying, forging, cheating.) That is not a very nice list of things you have given, but it is correct. People looking for "easy money" don't very much care if they cheat, or lie, or even murder, just so they get the money. There are not many of us who would injure another person just to get the money, but some of us are playing around with "Easy Money's" cousin.

Do you know his cousin's name? You have heard it many times—some of you have even said it. (Wait to see if they can suggest it.) "Easy Money's" cousin is named "Soft Snap." You have heard that!

What is a soft snap? (Wait for explanation.) Yes, some are looking for it around home, some want it at school, some want it when they hunt a job, and some are looking for it in church work.

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Are you a "soft snap" hunter—all pay and no work? I hope not! But there is another kind of a snap I wish you would try! It works. Its first name is "Ginger." Yes, use a "gingersnap." It will get you everything that you think you are getting in a "soft snap." Put plenty of *ginger* into your work. This old world is made rather queerly. We must eat or we shall starve; we must sleep or we shall exhaust our nerves; we must work or we shall rot. I can't explain all the whys. I only know that we are made that way—we need food and sleep and exercise. You have a body—keep it fit. You have a mind—use it. You have a spirit—exercise it. Snap it up. Put plenty of ginger into your tasks and you need not worry about the outcome.

VIII.

CARVING INITIALS

Gen. 2:9: "The tree of life also in the midst of the garden."

THERE is one thing which every boy wants and which most girls would like to have. I will give you three guesses as to what I have in mind. Who wants to make a guess? I mean a knife.

Do you remember the first knife you ever had? I remember my first one. It was not much of a knife! I have had many nicer ones since, but I liked that first knife of mine the best. Do you remember what you did with your knife when you first got it? Tell us.

I will tell you one of the first things I did with mine. I carried it all over the neighborhood so that every one could see it and admire it. Even when they had all seen it I could not put it away, so I wandered around in our yard cutting marks in everything I could find. When it seemed that there was nothing more to cut, I spied a tree over in one corner of the yard. I walked over to that tree and showed it my knife; then I began to scrape away the bark and to cut my initials deeply into the tree. My fingers got pretty sore, but I kept on until I had all of my initials cut there. Those initials stayed in that tree as long as the tree lived, but when it died we had to cut it down, and my initials went down also. How many of you have carved your initials somewhere?

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When I remembered that tree of ours, the other day, I thought of the Tree of Life which stood in the midst of God's garden long ago. God wants our names on that tree. He has given us our lives, as bright and new and keen as that first knife of mine. He wants us to take these lives and carve our names on that Tree of Life, and, because that tree lives forever, we, too, shall live, if we put our names there. Let us not spend all our strength in cutting our names in the trees of wealth and business and fame. Let us rather use some of our energy in carving our names deeply on God's Tree of Life, for we may be sure that they will always be there.

IX.

UNIFORMS

Rom. 13: 12: "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

THERE is not a person here who is not interested in our subject of this morning, for the subject is "Clothing."

I heard a man say once that "clothes do not make the man." I rather imagine that is true, but I somehow think that clothing helps to make the man. Do you remember that last new outfit you had—how fine and peppy you felt? I remember how I felt. Clothes do seem to make us finer and better when we know they fit and that we look well.

I have noticed another thing about clothing. Oftentimes it indicates what we are doing. Let us see if it doesn't! The fellow on the football field doesn't dress like the fellow in the band, does he? The fellow who works in a garage doesn't dress like the fellow who works in the drugstore, does he? Clothing does seem to indicate what we are doing, somewhat.

Folks who are doing much the same kind of work wear much the same kind of clothing. Cooks wear aprons, barbers wear jackets, and mechanics wear coveralls—a sort of uniform of their occupation. Let's name the different groups who wear real uniforms. (Wait for motormen, police, postmen, nurses, janitors,

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street-cleaners, soldiers, etc.) Why do they wear these uniforms? (Wait for reasons.)

Now, listen! I have heard it said a great many times that Christian soldiers should not be different from other people—that it is all right for them to talk and act like folks who are not Christians. But a real Christian has a uniform. It is his character. Don't you think we should be able to tell a Christian soldier by his character uniform? The Christian is a soldier in Christ's army. Did you go to the Quartermaster and get your uniform—a helmet for your head to keep your thinking right, a breastplate of faith to protect your heart, some strong shoes so you can take long marches for Christ? And I want to remind you, also, that a soldier wears his uniform every day—not just on dress parade. Let us get our character uniforms and wear them for Christ. Now let us sing "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and remember that our Captain is here.

X.

TRAFFIC BUTTONS

Luke 16: 10: "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

I N the center of certain intersections of our streets there is something that looks like a huge pancake or a big, gray turtle, but they call it a traffic button. It is supposed to button up traffic so that folks will not cut corners. When I have been over to — (name some other town), I have found at street crossings red and green light signals which I think are very fine, except that they say on some of them "No left turns," which makes me go blocks out of my way at times.

Why are these traffic buttons and signals? (Pause for suggestions.)

But they are not on every street. Why is that? (Pause for answers.)

Then, there are some corners that do not matter as much as others, because there is not as much danger there.

Now, there are some streets in *life* where cutting corners is very dangerous. One corner that so many cut is the corner of U and Truth Streets. Christ put in a traffic button there. Another is the corner of U and Honesty Streets. There is another traffic button there, but we clip the corners, and it isn't right. Then,

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one other corner we often clip is U and Purity Streets. We clip in with impure thoughts, bad language and dirty habits, but it is dangerous too.

I have seen some drivers of cars cut corners on our main streets and "get by" with it, but "getting by" isn't what we want. We want the streets to be safe for you and me and tiny folks. Sometimes the drivers cut corners just to be smart; but it isn't smart—it's smartie. There are some folks who cut the corners of Truth, Honesty and Purity just to show off, just for fun or just for a thrill; or it may be they don't think. But it would be too bad to injure their own character or that of some one else just for a thrill. Christ wants every one to get through this world without being hurt—not just you and me, but everybody—so He has put in some traffic buttons. Let us help make the world safe for the weak, the youngsters and ourselves by our turning square corners on Truth. Goodness and Purity,

XI.

BLUNDERS

John 2:3: "And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine."

DID you ever make a mistake? Be honest, now. Hands up—every one who has made a mistake. My, there are lots of us! I have my hand up too.

Do you remember any particular mistake you made, and what you did about it? I remember hearing of a man who dressed in the dark one morning, and when he got downtown he looked at his feet and discovered that he had on one tan shoe and one black one, so he had to hustle home again.

What are some of the mistakes that you know about? (Wait for several to be given.)

We all seem to make mistakes. Some of them are funny, while some of them are quite serious, and the least you can say for them is that they make a great deal of extra trouble.

I read a story one time of a man whose daughter was going to be married, so he decided to have a big wedding for her—fathers like to do nice things for their daughters. Many people were invited to this wedding. Everything went along in fine shape till it came time for the refreshments. The host had not ordered enough, so there was not enough to go around. What should they do? Some one had blundered.

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One of the guests was rather a peculiar man, but he knew how to help, so he turned in and made more. When the people tasted it, they said it was better than that which had been ordered at the village. You know where this wedding was and who it was that changed the water into wine. It must have been wonderful to have had Jesus as a guest. Don't you think so?

We all make so many little mistakes and blunders. We get discouraged and blue; we don't know just what to do. But, if Jesus is our guest, He will know what to do. He will take the little, common things we have in our homes and make them sweeter to us than anything we can buy in the village. He doesn't have any cheap goods to offer. Everything is of the best.

Have you ever asked Jesus to come and be a guest in your life? Is Jesus a friend of yours?

XII.

JULY FOURTH

Josh. 1: 6: "Be strong and of good courage."

WHAT country do we think is the best in all the world? (Secure answers.)

What is our great national day? (July Fourth.)

Now I am going to name several persons who have helped to make this such a fine country, and as I name them I want you to tell me what they did.

Columbus? — The Pilgrims? — William Penn? — George Washington? — Abraham Lincoln? — Daniel Webster? — The pioneers? — Benedict Arnold? Oh! You don't approve of him? Why not? —

When people fight for a country and work for a country, we call them patriotic, but we call Arnold a traitor because he worked against it.

What do you and I need to do to be patriotic? Should we stand on some street corner and shout, "I am a good citizen," "I am a good citizen"? No! What do good citizens do? (Give time for suggestions; such as, pay taxes, protect and build up.) How do good citizens behave?

We need to take care of our Government, for it takes care of us—our roads, our property, our business, our schools, our churches. We do not want any traitors here; we want good citizens.

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But we are also citizens of another kingdom—the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. God wants us to be patriotic citizens there too. There are many friends of God's kingdom—nurses, doctors, teachers, preachers, and others. But there are some enemies, too—greed, selfishness, avarice, and many more.

Are you a good citizen in this kingdom of God? Are you loyal and true to Christ? Are you willing to spend time and money to help build and keep His kingdom? You know the only way we can tell whether or not an American is loyal to his country is by the way he acts. The only way we can tell whether or not you are loyal to Christ is by the way you act.

Let us all be good citizens of America and good citizens of the kingdom of God!

XIII.

A HUNTING-TRIP

John 21: 6: "And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat and ye shall find."

DID you ever hunt for anything? Did you? Did you ever go hunting? That is just a little different, isn't it? Of course, I don't mean hunting with guns and traps for animals—that is one kind of hunting, and a real exciting kind, too, but it is only one kind of hunting. I have known people to go hunting for berries and nuts and eggs. I have known girls to go four-leaf clover hunting and flower hunting. I have known boys to go bug hunting and butterfly hunting. I have known older folks to go hunting for an education, for wealth, for office.

Why do people go hunting? (Wait for a few suggestions.)

Yes, I suppose they go because there is something they want and are willing to work to get it.

What about these people who don't go hunting? Isn't there anything they want? (Wait for answer.)

Well, maybe there is and maybe there isn't; but, at any rate, they are too lazy to go after it. And what do you suppose I have caught some of these lazy folks doing? I have caught them finding fault because other folks have things and they have not. They say that you hunters have all the luck when it wasn't luck

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at all. It was because you were willing to go after the thing you wanted.

Did you ever wonder why some folks seem to be in everything and others in nothing? Sometimes, when we have been jealous we have said it was luck or somebody's partiality, but it is not fair to say that. They are in things because they are willing to work, and work hard, to put a good thing across.

I have noticed that out in the world many of the most valuable things are hidden and must be hunted for or dug for—gold and silver and platinum and diamonds. I have noticed that many of the other things we want in life, like happiness, success and friends, need to be hunted for, need to be worked for. If we are not willing to do that, we must be fair and not be envious or jealous of others when they have hunted and worked and found success, happiness and friends. Jesus Christ has taught us how to find the greatest happiness, but we must be willing to work for it, and the greater the thing we want, the harder we must dig to get it.

What do you want out of life? How hard are you willing to work to get it? Let's take with us One who knows, even Christ. He knows what is best, and will show us where and how to find the best.

XIV.

BORROWING AXES

2 Kings 6:5: "Alas, my master! for it was borrowed."

ONCE upon a time there was a poor peasant who needed to cut some wood, but he had no ax. Of course he could not cut wood without an ax, so he scurried about until he found one which he could borrow, then he went into the forest. The trees along the river-bank looked the best to him—they generally are the best, you know. He selected a fine, large tree, and fell to chopping. It happened, however, that the ax he had borrowed was not very good, and the ax-head came off and fell into the water. The peasant tried to get it out; but the stream was deep, and the ax-head was heavy, so he could not. He sat down upon the bank and began to weep and wail, for he might be beaten or put into prison for losing the ax.

Now, it happened that passing through the woods was a man who heard the noise of the peasant's wailing and hurried over to find what was the trouble. When the stranger heard where the ax had fallen, he took a long pole and fished around in the water until he succeeded in finding it; then he managed to move it to a point where he could reach it. The peasant, hastily drying his tears, hurried to return the ax and to buy one of his own that he might not be caught in this fix again.

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That is just a little story, but I want you to think of the axes. They have handles, and they have heads, and they are used to chop with. The old pioneers with their axes cleared the forests about them, and made a place to live. They had large farms or small farms according to the space they cleared. They had axes of their own.

Did you ever borrow anything? Hands up if you have! Of course people borrow everything from pins to cars, don't they? I have known folks to borrow things like a swaggering manner and brains and religion and bad habits and character. It may be that we need to borrow sometimes, and when we do borrow we should borrow something useful. It is better to have things of our own.

Now, we have to make our own clearing in life. We have to cut our own way in the world. We need an ax! There is a magic ax that will cut a large place for you. The handle of that ax is called Character. It must not be weak; it must not be splintered; it must not have knots in it. Our character must be strong. Our ax must also have a good head and blade. Let us call that your brains. Just as the ax must be kept sharpened, so your brains must be kept sharpened. Then you will have a good ax, good brains. But an ax must not be left standing in a corner. It must be used. You must chop, swing your ax. No big tree comes down with one blow. Take your good character and your sharpened brain and make a place for yourself in the world. And remember! The world is not away off somewhere. It is right here.

XV.

OUTGROWN TOYS

1 Cor. 13: 11: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things."

TO-DAY we are going to have an experience meeting—a sort of old-fashioned thing, but pretty good at that. Our question is, What kind of play do you enjoy most? (Pause for answers.)

All right, then we are ready for the next question. What are some of the games you used to like? (Wait again for answers.)

Quite a variety of games, isn't it? Do you know that there is one funny thing about our play and our games? You can tell just about how old a person is by what he likes to play or amuse himself with. Let's see if we can.

The baby—what kind of toys does he like? (Rattles.)

Little children under four? (Rubber balls, little wagons, buckets, blocks.)

Children from eight to ten? (Marbles, tops, wagons, sleds, dolls.)

Ten to fifteen? (Baseball, football, parties.)

Fifteen to twenty? (Tennis, volley-ball, golf.) These older people do not have so many different kinds of games; they have more work to do.

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Now, how many of you would like to go around playing with a baby's rattle all your life? No, you wouldn't like that. But we love babies; they laugh and sparkle and smile at us. We do all we can for them, carry them about, get them food and drink, dress them, and keep them safe. But how would you feel if you knew that a little baby you love would never grow up—that when he is fifteen or twenty years old he would be just as he is now? You would feel badly, wouldn't you? We love babies, but we want them to grow, to develop.

Well, the Bible tells us that we are God's children. I wonder if God does not feel about us as we feel about the babies! When we are young Christians—that is, when we have not been Christians very long—we need much care; but we should grow into stronger Christians all the time—not be pulled and carried around by others all our lives.

They tell me that some of you are too young to think seriously. I wonder how old you think a person should be before he begins to think about his soul and what he is going to do with it. The great apostle Paul says "now is the time" and "to-day is the day."

XVI.

LOBSTERS AND MONKEYS

Matt. 16: 26: "What shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

MOST of us have heard of lobsters. Who will describe one? Yes, they are big, green crayfish, and are caught for food and market.

I wonder if you know the easiest way to catch a lobster. They tell me that in some of the islands of the sea the natives have an easy way of catching them. They take a cocoanut, crack it open, fasten a cord to it and toss it into the water and wait. The lobster comes, fastens his claws on the bait, and the natives begin to draw in the cord. The silly lobster will not let go, and the natives pull him in and drop him into their baskets. Now, isn't a lobster stupid to give up his life just because he will not let go of a piece of cocoanut? I wonder if there is anything else in the world as stupid as a lobster. I think that there is—a monkey.

They tell me that when a native wants to catch a monkey, he simply takes a gourd, makes a hole in it just large enough for the front paw of a monkey to go through when his paw is open. After this hole is made just the right size, the native puts a little rice in the bottom of the gourd and fastens it to a tree. Mr. Monkey comes to the gourd, reaches his paw inside and gets it full of rice. Now, because the opening is

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small, he can not get his paw out unless he lets go of the rice. But he will not let go of the rice, so the natives walk up and capture him. Monkeys surely have very little sense to give up their freedom for a handful of rice.

What would you be willing to give up your life for? I would not want you to give it up for a little thing. But some of our young people are getting caught every day because they want to hold on to some silly thing—maybe a cigaret or loafing or gambling.

Many traps are made to draw folks away from the church. Evil persons say it is sissy to belong to church; or they say that you should be “regular fellows” and have a high old time. Some folks get caught in traps that spoil their reputation or cripple their character and get put into a cage till they die.

Lobsters and monkeys are not supposed to have much brain, but folks like us are supposed to have. Let's not make lobsters or monkeys of ourselves.

XVII.

BROKEN TRAINING

Mark 13: 13: "But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

THERE is something queer about athletics. I like athletics, almost any kind, from tennis to football, but I repeat that there is something queer about athletics.

We had company for dinner the other day—a football fellow. He was a fine chap, but he did a queer thing at that dinner. When it came time for pie we could not get him to take any, and it was good pie too! I asked him if he was sick, and he said: "No, I am not sick. I am in training, so I can not eat pie." Now, I call that mighty queer! Why shouldn't a fellow eat pie if he wants to, even if he is in training? (Wait for suggestions.)

I discovered that there were other things that the coach does not want his boys to do. Do you know any of these things? (Cigarets, late hours, etc.)

Why does a coach want a boy to give up these things?

How long do they have to keep up this training? Till the end of the season!

But if a boy does not give them up he will not be as good a player as if he had given them up. Is that so?

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We always want the best players we can get, don't we?

I discovered, also, that giving things up is not all they expect of fellows in training. They have to take good, stiff exercise and workout every day in order to keep their muscles hard so they can stand all the knocks and kicks and falls they will get. They study hard to learn a bunch of rules so they will not foul and bring a penalty on the team. Then, with their coach they sit down and figure out runs and passes and plunges so they can reach the goal in spite of the opposition.

There is considerable work even in play. Almost any game you can think of takes work—the bigger the game, the harder the work. Then, too, we need a coach.

Will you think with me for a moment about the big game which every one of us has to play, whether he wants to or not? It is the great game of life. Some people are good players, some are poor.

Christ is a wonderful coach in this game of life. He wishes the people on His team to train so they will be the best of players. There are some things He asks them not to do. He asks them not to be evil-minded, not to envy, not to steal. He asks them to exercise daily in purity, in faith, in prayer, so that their spiritual muscles will be strong. He asks them to study his rule-book, the Bible.

Some people lose in the game of life because they will not train.

XVIII.

ROPE

Ecc. 4: 12: "A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

NOTE.—Assign this topic a week in advance, asking the girls to look up the making of rope, and boys the uses of rope and twine.

WE are ready for our ropes! What did you find out? How is rope made?

Now that we know how it is made, we want a long list of things for which it is used. Who is ready with one? (Secure as long a list as time will permit.)

According to what you have been telling me, life and property depend a great deal upon ropes—tying packages, rigging ships, making swings, fastening horses, lifting windows, suspending scaffolds, running elevators—just everywhere we need ropes and strings. Ropes seem to hold things in place when they are strong, but they will let them fall apart if they are weak or rotten.

I also understand, from what you have said, that a rope is made up of strands, and the strength of the rope depends upon the strength of these strands. The rope-makers select the material according to the strength of the rope they desire to make. Am I right?

If you were working on a scaffold, would you want a weak rope supporting the scaffold? Would you want a rotten rope? What sort of rope would you want?

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There is a rope upon which much of your getting up in the world is going to depend. If it is strong, you can be lifted to high places, but if it is weak or rotten, and you try to rise higher, you will fall. We call this rope character, and it is made up of strands called choices—the things you choose to do in your work, in your play; whether you work honestly, whether you play fair, or whether you choose to work dishonestly and play unfair. These things you choose to do make the strands in your rope of character. Sin binds us with “cords of falsehood” (Isa. 5:18); but we are bound to Christ by cords of love.

It makes a great deal of difference as to what we tie to. What are you choosing to use—the good, the pure, the true? What are you making in character—a weak rope, a rotten rope that will not hold you out of evil, a rope of falsehood, or a rope of honesty?

One thing further—it matters where you fasten even a good rope. Let us tie our character ropes around the Lord Christ. Then they will be secure.

XIX.

CRUTCHES AND LADDERS

John 10: 10: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

NOTE.—For this a blackboard is necessary.

I AM going to try to be an artist this morning. I do not know much about being an artist, but I am going to try. I hope you can tell, when I have finished, what I have drawn.

I am going to draw something like a cane, V-shaped at the upper end with a scooped-out cross-piece at the top.

Now, what does it look like?

Yes, I meant to make a crutch. Now I want some one to put a few lines on the board here, just as I tell him. All right, Frank, here is the chalk. Put one big, heavy line up and down, the full length of the blackboard. Then put another one just like it about a foot from it. Now put lines across from one to the other about six inches apart. There, what do you have a picture of? Yes, it looks like a ladder. Thank you, Frank; you have been a fine artist. Since we have the pictures of these two things on the board, let us study them a moment.

What is a crutch for? What is the cross-piece for at the top?

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Then, the ladder, what are ladders for? (Secure a long list of uses.)

So, lame people need crutches and stronger people need ladders.

Did you ever realize that some people think of God as a crutch and others think of God as a ladder? Those who think of Him as a crutch go limping through life, while those who think of Him as a ladder climb up to higher things.

We need crutches—people are always getting hurt, and some can never walk as the most of us walk; but we need ladders to do the work of the world. How do you think of God, as a crutch to help you out of trouble, or to lean on when you have hurt yourself, or are you a strong person who regards Him as a ladder to climb in order that you may reach the best in life?

The best fruit is higher up on the trees, and splendid things are often on high shelves which little people can not reach.

God will be a crutch for you to lean on if you should hurt yourself, but you do not want to be a lame Christian all your life and go limping into heaven.

Isaiah, in your Bible, puts it still better when he says: "They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

XX.

KEYS UNLOCK DOORS

1 Cor. 16: 9: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me."

A VERY necessary part of every man's equipment is a bunch of keys. He needs them to jingle in his pocket when he is out of money. He needs them to twirl around on his finger when he talks to folks. He needs them to lose so he will have something to grumble about. He needs them to lock and unlock things, like doors, desks and automobiles. He needs keys.

Some of you need keys, and other folks need keys. How many of you have one or more keys? Hands up high! You are almost full grown when you have a bunch of keys.

Why do we lock up places? (Wait for suggestions.) Oh, because there are valuable things with which every one can not be trusted!

Some things stay locked up because the key is lost and no one knows how to get in. As I look over this old world I discover that some things were locked up tight, and no one knew how to get in till the Christian religion came with the key to the door. One door to which Christianity had the key was the door of education. Unchristian lands do not bother with educating folks, even to-day. Then, it opened the door of health, bringing in doctors, nurses, hospitals. Then

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it opened the door for the protection of the weak, the orphans, the cripples—for they are put out to die in non-Christian lands. The church has opened many doors for us.

So much for these big doors! There are some smaller doors which we folks right here would like to enter, but we will need to get the key before they will open to us.

There is that door of popularity, much sought for. Who does not want to be popular? Three good keys to open that door are sociability, generosity, good manners and good nature. Slide these on your key-ring and you can open the door.

Again, we all want to be happy. We can open the door to happiness with the keys of little courtesies, pleasant words, smiles, well wishing and a clean conscience. Put these on your key-ring.

Now let's try the door of great opportunity. How we long to open the door to big things! Here are some keys that will turn the locks: dependability, high ideals, promptness, hard work and determination. Put these on your key-ring and close it up tight, for there are other keys which will open doors that we do not want to enter. I will tell you the keys, and, when you hear the bunch, see if you can tell me the door they will open. Grumble, nag, complain, exaggerate, bluff, half-done and late. Who can tell the door? The door of failure!

The greatest key in the world is the gospel of Christ. It opens the kingdom of God. This key is available to you.

XXI.

TRAINS AND BUSES

Matt. 22: 20: "And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?"

HOW many of you have been twenty miles or more from here?

It seems as though people are always going from one place to another; there are so many trains, busses and street-cars that are full of folks all the time who want to get from one place to another.

Do all these people on the trains ride free? Do some people try to ride free sometimes? What do we call those who are always trying to ride free? (Bums.)

What is the difference between a bum and a passenger? Then, the bum lies and steals and cheats to get his ride, while the passenger pays his fare! Which is the more likely to have a safe and complete journey—the bum or the passenger? That is clear!

Now, then, do all passengers pay the same amount of fare? Who decides how much a passenger shall pay for his ride? Is it right that a passenger should pay for his ride?

There is a wonderful trip I wish you all might take—there is so much beauty along the route! There are mountains and valleys, streams and flowers, with a little desert. Every one who has taken it says that it is a remarkable trip. It is the trip from earth to

heaven on God's gospel train. It is such a clean train with such a safe track that we need not be fearful of wrecks.

Of course, we can not expect to ride for nothing if we want to be passengers. We must get our tickets. They may cost us something—repentance, maybe; or they may cause us to use a great deal of faith in God; or they may cost us some hard knocks, or some time, or some effort; but it is fair that we pay for our tickets if we are going that way.

There are some folks trying to ride on this train who are just plain bums, trying to beat their way to heaven without paying any fare. They are keeping all their meanness, they are letting some one else do all the spending of time and energy for the church to keep good things moving in the world, and yet they expect to reach heaven just bumming.

But, do you know, they will never make all the journey? No! For some time the conductor is going to pass very close to them; he is going to ask to see their tickets. They can not lie to him; they can not slide down and hide back of some one else. When they are not able to show their ticket, he is going to say: "I am sorry, traveler, but you will either have to get your ticket or get off the train." That is fair, isn't it?

Are you a passenger on this train to heaven? Let us be sure of our tickets by clean living, obedience, faith and love!

XXII.

CHIPS AND SCRAPS

Luke 14: 28: "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he hath wherewith to complete it?"

TO-DAY I have made up a list of words for us to straighten out. I wish some one would explain what sawdust is. Next, what are shavings? Then, what are chips?

Who knows what filings are?

What do we call little pieces of cloth? What are ravelings?

What are crumbs?

Now we have the whole collection; I wonder what we can make of it!

How much of a house can be made from shavings, chips and sawdust?

How good a tank can be made from nothing but filings?

How much of a coat can be made from nothing but scraps and ravelings?

How satisfying a meal can be made out of nothing but crumbs?

How much of an aeroplane can be built of junk?

I am sure that by this time you have caught my idea. We can not make much that is worth while out of mere left-over stuff. We need whole pieces to work

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with, whether it is boards, or cloth, or time, or energy, or food.

When we want to make a house or a dress or a suit, or get a meal, we decide how we would like to have it, then we look at our material and plan how we can get it out to the best advantage, then we cut and fasten each part into its place. That is good sense, isn't it?

More than this, we know that piling one board on top of another board and another board on top of these only makes a lumber pile. It does not make a house until we begin to fit each board into its place.

Do you know that I have found people who think they can make a worth-while life just haphazard, without any plan toward which to work—just piling up scraps of time, ravelings of thought, a few shavings of energy? But that is not the way to really make a life. Piling one day on top of another day does not make a life; it makes a pile of days. We should start by planning how we can use our days to the best advantage; take time to plan with the great master-builder, Jesus Christ, the sort of a life we want to make out of our days, and then we should fit each day into that plan.

Making a life is fitting together those things which make your character—your courage, your self-control, your fairness, your purity. Making a living is important—that is what helps care for the body; but making a life cares for the soul.

XXIII.

A TOOL-BOX

Gal. 6: 4: "Let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone and not of his neighbor."

DO you happen to know some one who is a carpenter? Did you ever look at his box of tools? What all did he have in it? Yes, hammers, saws, chisels, bars, pliers—many things. How many of these tools can he use at one time? Why does he have so many, then? When does he use his hammer? When does he use his saw?

Could a carpenter do very much work without his tools? Are good tools expensive?

Other people besides carpenters use tools. Some of these are called instruments. What instruments or tools does the dentist have? the baker? the butcher? the bookkeeper? the lawyer? People need tools to get on in the world's work.

Each of us has a tool-box. We are to put the tools in it ourselves. Isn't that great? We are allowed to go to the wholesale house and select any tool we want. These heads of ours are our tool-boxes.

I have known some people who are taking these fine tool-chests and making trash-cans out of them, full of dirty, filthy thoughts, full of carelessness, full of spoiled jobs they should have done well, full of rubbish that

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can never drive a single nail for them, full of cheap stuff that is not worth saving—that is what goes into trash-cans, you know.

I have known some other young people who are looking for the strongest and sharpest tools they can find. They are getting good hammers—brains trained to think, so they can work their way into life. They are making sharp saws of their brains so they will be able to cut just what they need in life. They are securing powerful lenses of thought so they can discover hidden things in the world. They are sharpening some idea chisels so they can cut the rough edges from hard places in life.

What are you doing with that head of yours? Are you making a trash-can of it, or are you making a tool-box? God's word says: "As a man thinketh, so is he." You will need a well-filled tool-chest if you intend to get very far in the world. Read Phil. 4:8, and find out what to think about.

XXIV.

THE SPARE TIRE

Matt. 5: 41: "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two."

HOW many wheels are there on the average automobile? Strange! I have noticed that fastened on the side or on the rear of most cars there is another tire, all pumped up and ready to go. Have you noticed that? What is this fifth tire? Why do cars need spare tires? How often do they need to use spare tires?

I see! This spare tire is for emergencies, and people carry it along all the time because they might need it some time. Doesn't that seem a little foolish to you? Then, if any one should take a very long trip without an extra tire, he might be delayed during the journey.

I have watched some people as they have prepared to start on the journey through life. They seemed to think that if they just could "get by" each day—by the teacher, by the merchant, by the folks at home—they had done all that was necessary. Such people are not getting nearly as much pleasure from life as they would get if they carried some things for emergencies. I wish they had a little extra to run on.

Emergencies are going to come in life; things are going to go flat for us sometimes just as sure as punctures come to cars, and if we have used up everything

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as we have gone along it is going to be pretty hard for us.

If we have just barely gotten by in our lessons, we will not have the training to do the bigger things in life. You know that if you are out on the highway and a tire goes flat, and you do not have your spare tire, *you do not have it!* No amount of wishing can make one, either, can it?

That is the way it is going to be on the highway of life when we encounter some unexpected bumps or punctures and things go flat for us. If we then do not have that extra training or extra health or preparation to spare, *we simply will not have it*, that's all. No amount of wishing, then, is going to get it for us.

Oh, I know that we are all excited over starting on this trip through life. We feel that we will never have any punctures, or mishaps, or rough places; but let me repeat that they are just as sure to happen in life as punctures are to happen to tires. I wish we would not be content with just getting by—that is, putting on rotten tires to start with. I wish we might do just a little more than is expected of us each day, so we shall have some extra supplies with us as we travel.

XXV.

PENS AND PENCILS

John 19: 22: "What I have written I have written."

NOTE.—One week in advance, ask the girls to read up on pens and ink, and the boys to read concerning pencils.

WHAT have you found out about pens?

What have you found out about pencils?

What have you discovered concerning ink?

How many different kinds of pencils are commonly used to-day? (Lead, slate, crayon, indelible, ever-sharp.)

What are our ordinary pens made of?

What are some of the most common kinds of ink? What is indelible ink or an indelible pencil? We seem to know that we have all these pens, inks and pencils. Do we know what they are for? But why do we want to write? There are some folks who claim they can tell what kind of person you are by looking at your writing. I can not do that, but I have discovered something else. I have discovered that there are pens and pencils that are writing on folks, on their lives and on their characters.

The sad part about these pencils which write on folks is that all are indelible pencils, so that nothing can be erased. No matter how sorry we are or how much we would like to change the writing, it sticks after it is once written.

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I wonder if we can name some of these pencils that are writing on our lives and on the lives of our friends and acquaintances. I will begin. Schools are such pencils. Who can mention others? (Churches, homes, movies, books, associates.)

All these are busy writing something in your life and mine. Are they writing things which we shall be proud to have others read, or are they writing things of which we shall be ashamed? We can control that, you know! Suppose you had received a fine book as a gift, and some one were to come along and begin to scribble all through it. What could you do to stop him? Exactly! And that is just what you will have to do if some of these other pencils are scribbling things which you do not want in your life. Get your life away from him. You can do that. You must do it! We do not want evil influences to spoil our lives by scribbling wrong things there.

I found this quotation one day: "The moving finger writes, and, having writ, moves on, nor all your piety nor wit can call it back again to cancel half a line, nor all your tears wipe out a word of it." Writing is serious business! John the apostle says about the written word of God: "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

XXVI.

HEROES

Matt. 20:26: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister."

ALL the world loves a lover, so folks say. It seems to be true, but I have discovered some one else whom all the world loves. All the world loves a hero. Isn't that so? We all have our favorite heroes, haven't we?

If we were to make a list of heroes, whose names would you suggest to be included? I should like to put Columbus in for one of mine.

We have heard this long list of heroes. Wouldn't I like to have my name there along with those? Wouldn't it be grand if our favorite would walk over and shake hands with us? Wouldn't folks stare if Pershing should walk down the street with me to-day? Wouldn't I feel important?

I should like so very much to be a hero that I studied about some of these fellows to find out how they came to be heroes. I discovered that it was the same in every case, so I made what I call a "Hero Receipt." Here it is: Have some good thing you want to do, and have grit enough to do it.

You remember about Paul Revere. He wanted to get the news to the folks before the redcoats arrived, so he rode all night as hard as he could ride, and he

succeeded. He knew what he wanted to do, and he had grit enough to do it. The dark night, the loss of sleep, the hard riding, not even the British bullets, could stop him.

Then, there was Grace Darling, whose father kept the lighthouse. When the terrible storm came and the boat was wrecked and the sailors were drowning, Grace knew that she wanted to save those sailors. She had the grit to do it, in spite of the stormy night, in spite of the wind and rocks and danger.

Every once in awhile we hear of a fire-fighter who saves some one from the flames, and he becomes a hero. He has the desire to rescue, and he has the grit to do it, in spite of the smoke, in spite of the flames, in spite of the danger.

Heroes and heroines render service gladly without having money as their object. Heroism has never been paid for in money. I can tell right now whether or not you are made of the stuff heroes are made of, just by getting your answer to one question. Are you willing to work hard, very hard, without pay in money, for something that is right and because it is right, or do you think you must be paid in cash for everything you do? If the first, then you are made of the stuff heroes are made of; if the last, you will never make a hero, no matter if you have a million chances.

Money is worth much, but people are worth more. Jesus Christ, the greatest hero the world has ever known, died for others—gave His life that men might be saved from sin.

XXVII.

A LIBRARY

2 Cor. 3: 2: "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men."

I VISITED the public library the other day. You have been there, haven't you? Books, books, books—story-books, histories, poetical books—everywhere books! What do we want with so many books? Oh, to read and learn!

Did you ever notice how we read a book? It is something like this: We pick out one by the title. If that suits us, we leaf through the pages, looking at the pictures. Did you ever do that? Then, if we like the pictures, we look at the print to see if we can read it easily. Then, if all these things suit us, we may read the book. Funny, isn't it?

Did you know that God has a lot of libraries? Oh, we call them churches, but they are libraries, and the members are the books. Yes, you and I. People come in and look around till they see some of us with the title "Christian." They take our life down and look it through for the pictures—yes, the scenes that portray us; it may be our tempers, or our snobbishness, or our coarseness, or it may be our cheer, our friendliness or our trustworthiness. If they do not like these scenes, they put us to one side just as we do a book whose pictures we do not like. But if they do like

them, they begin to look at other things, such as habits and speech and manners and ideals. If these are clear-cut, they may take time to really know us.

What are your outstanding traits and habits? Would they draw folks to you, or would they make folks shun you? Do folks know what you stand for? We do not like blurred pages in a book; we do not like smeared principles in folks any better.

The all-important thing about a book is this: it must have in it what its title says it has. What do you expect to find in an arithmetic? In a speller? In a song-book? In a history? In a story-book?

Paul said that Christians are books in God's library, "known and read of all men." Now, then, if our title says "Christian," folks have a right to expect our lives to teach and explain Christ. They will be disappointed to find other things there, just as we would be disappointed to find a history full of arithmetic or a story-book full of spelling lessons. What kind of a book are you?

XXVIII.

SHOPPING

Matt. 13: 45: "Like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls."

ALMOST all of you have been down on our main street, haven't you? What is it made up of, largely? Yes, stores, shops, markets. Do you like to go shopping? I think it gets rather tiresome, myself. But if we want things, we must shop.

How many of you ever went shopping for something important, like shoes and hats? I discovered that there is one thing which a person needs before much shopping can be done. What do you suppose I have in mind? Yes, we surely do need money to shop. You can buy almost anything if you are willing to spend enough money. But suppose you are not willing to spend your money, or have not the money to spend, what then? Exactly right—you will have to do without the things.

I heard, the other day, of some gold nuggets which any one could have if he wanted to pick them up. You may not have all you want of them, but you may have some of them, and you may spend them just as you do money. They will buy almost anything which money will buy, and many things which money will not buy. Would you like to go after them? I can tell you where the chart is that will help you find

them. Your watch or your clock is the chart. Now you are disappointed, aren't you? But let us see if *seconds* and *minutes* and *hours* are not really gold nuggets.

People talk about spending time, don't they? If they spend it, they must get something with it—that's common sense, isn't it? When we spend money we get something for it. Well, when we spend time we get something for it too. The value of the thing we get, either for our money or our time, shows how much of a business person we are. Did you ever consider that?

I know of a number of things we can get if we are willing to spend the time. We can get health, we can get knowledge, we can get music, we can get friends, we can get happiness. I know that many folks spend time for other things, such as getting a poor reputation for loafing around, getting empty heads by bluffing, getting enemies by being dishonest. Such persons are poor business folks, for they let themselves be cheated.

Would you throw away sixty cents a day—just throw it away like you often do sixty seconds? No, you would not. God's minute is worth as much as Uncle Sam's penny. We think that, because we have so many years to live, it does not matter if we waste a few; but, friends, it does matter. Hours are God's gold nuggets, and they buy things for heaven.

XXIX.

HORSES AND HARNESS

Luke 12: 23: "Life is more than the food, and the body ~~more~~ than the raiment."

THERE is quite a famous movie called "The Vanishing American." How many of you have seen it? Who are the vanishing Americans of the picture? Indians!

There is another friend of the white man, here in America, that is rapidly disappearing. Do you know what I mean? I mean the horse—faithful old Dobbin! I remember when any one who was anybody had a horse or two; but now every one, whether he is anybody or not, seems to have a car.

Will some one give us a brief description of a good horse? Fine!

Will some one furnish us with a description of a poor horse? Good description!

Now, who can explain to us the difference between the horse and the harness? Then, if you have a poor horse, it does not make a good horse of him to dress him up in fancy harness. Or, if you have a good horse, it does not change him into a pack of bones if he has to wear old, patched harness.

You all think you could tell the difference between the horse and his harness, do you? Yes, I think you could; but I wonder if you are as keen in other things.

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Can you tell the difference between a true friend and a false one? Or do you pick out your friends by the clothing they wear?

Can you tell the difference between knowing your lessons and just "getting by" the teacher?

Can you tell the difference between excitement and real happiness? Many people think they are happy when they are only excited.

Can you tell the difference between standing upon your own ideals and leaning on the other fellow's wishes? Can you tell the difference between a strong character and a weak one? There is just the same difference as there is between the horse and his harness. One is able to do nothing alone; the other is able to accomplish his task.

Can you tell the difference between a Christian and one who only dresses up like one by pretending? God can! If you love God, He knows it; if you are only pretending, He knows that too. When He comes to select His people He will not judge by the harness, their pretense; He will judge by their hearts and lives.

XXX.

TRUNKS AND TRAVELING-BAGS

Ex. 28: 5: "And they shall take the gold, and the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet."

WERE you ever at a passenger station when a train was about to arrive or leave? What were some of the things you noticed there? What about these trunks and traveling-bags—are they expensive? Are they some trouble to carry along? Do people ever get tired of looking after them? Why don't folks leave them at home, since they are so much bother?

Oh, I see! There are some things in these bags and trunks which the owners are going to need after awhile. When do they get them ready? Before they start!

Well, does the person who is going to Alaska pack the same kind of clothing as the person who is headed for Mexico? Does the one who is going to Greenland pack the same kind of clothing as the one who is bound for Africa? Does the one who is going to visit at the royal court of a king take the same kind of togs as the one who is going to the harvest-field to work?

You are right! You can think straight! I want to suggest an idea for you to think over this week, about packing clothing for the soul—that part of you which does not die. Your soul is the real you, and

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you are packing your soul-clothing for a journey into a far country. There are two of these countries which your soul has an invitation to enter. God invites you to the one we call heaven; the powers of evil invite you to the other, called hell. The one invitation is to the royal court of the King of heaven; the other to a dark prison. The time to pack your soul's traveling-bag is now, before it starts on the long journey. Just as you can tell easily by the things which are packed in a person's traveling-bag whether that person is headed for the northlands or the southlands, for the harvest-fields or the king's court, so you can tell by the things which you pack into your life which way you are heading your soul. Habits and characteristics are the clothing of the soul, you know. Remember, your soul has an invitation to join a King's court. It may cost you something to get the right habits, because good habits, like good clothing, are expensive. You may get tired of looking after your luggage, but you will need it later, so keep on.

Is the clothing for your soul ready to wear in heaven, or are you packing your life with the cheap, prison clothing of bad habits and weak principles? We do not want to be ashamed of the clothing we have provided for our souls to wear in eternity.

XXXI.

GETTING A JOB

Matt. 21: 28: "Son, go work to-day in the vineyard."

IF you are up fairly early any morning, you can see numbers of people—boys, girls, men, women—hurrying through our streets. Some of them have lunch-boxes and dinner-pails, some wear overalls, some wear neat business suits, but they are all stepping right along. You have seen them, haven't you? Where are they going? To work! Whom do they work for? So some people work for other people, do they? How many of you ever had a real job? Fine!

Do folks work for nothing day after day? So, when one person works for another person he gets paid for it, does he? And he gets the pay when the job is done, or on pay-day, doesn't he?

Well, suppose Tom, here, is working for a grocer. Does Tom do what he wants to do, or what the grocer wants him to do? If Tom is working for the grocer, does he collect his pay from the grocer, or from some shoestore man? Of course, the fellow he works for pays him.

I am glad we have that straight, for there are two firms offering you young people jobs. One of them offers you pay each day as you go along, and, after you are through, a savings account will be waiting for you. The other offers you some excitement with

your work, but when you are through you have to pay everything you possess to the proprietor.

Christ stands here and asks you to work for Him. He tells you frankly it will be a hard job. You have to keep your life clean, your health strong, and your minds pure. He pays as He goes, and gives you heaven in the end.

Satan runs the other firm. He offers you some thrills. He does not care how dirty you let your mind get, or how evil your heart becomes, because in the end you have to pay him fees forever.

If I had a chance to work with two different firms, I would look them over rather carefully. Which are you going to work for—Christ or Satan? If you work for Satan, you can not expect Christ to reward you. Some people act as though they expect to work all their lives for Satan and have Christ admit them to heaven. That is not good logic, is it? They must get their pay-check from the firm for which they work.

Which pay-check do you want—Christ's or Satan's? Think it over, asking yourself how long you could hold a job in God's business with your way of living.

XXXII.

CAN YOU SPELL?

Luke 12: 15: "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

WHEN I used to go to school they had what they called "spell-downs." Do they have them any more? They do! My! don't they make you feel queer inside? And don't you rather hope that you can stand up till the last one? It was hard for me to learn to spell. Is it hard for you? Keep at it!

You know, I have discovered that living is rather like spelling down; yes, it is! You need to study and study which things are right, and then stand up before the world and say them. Some people are spelled down real early in life because they do not study hard enough.

There are some things which we are all trying to spell out in life. Success is one of them. We all want to be standing in the success row till the end. Happiness is another one of the things we want to spell, for we all try to be happy. Then, again, we want to know how to spell "God," for all of us want to be counted in when God counts His folks.

The only reason we won't be standing in these rows will be because we didn't learn how to spell the words. Some people spell success M-O-N-E-Y, but that is wrong. There are many monuments in this

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country which folks have erected in honor of successful men, like Lincoln, Webster and the Unknown Soldier; but I don't know of a single one which has been erected to a man of honor just because he was rich. M-O-N-E-Y does not spell success. A right thing well done spells success.

Next take happiness. Some people spell that T-H-R-I-L-L-S. If they can just get all the thrills they want, all the excitement, then they think they will be happy. But they are spelling it wrong; they will not stand long in the happiness row. Happiness is spelled out in unselfish service; in helping others. Try it that way; you will stand till the last.

Then, some folks try to spell God M-E: what I want to do; what I please; what I like; what I don't like; ME! ME! ME! But we know that is not correct. God is spelled L-O-V-E for others, and we will have to spell it that way to be right.

How do you spell success and happiness and God? Are you going to be counted out in the great spelling-match of living because you do not put in the right actions and thoughts; because you are trying to spell these words to suit yourself? Let's be counted, when God counts His scholars, by learning His way of spelling!

XXXIII.

BOOBS

2 Chron. 30:10: "But they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them."

WHEN I hear folks talking, I sometimes listen to what they say, even if they are not talking to me. There are two words I have heard quite frequently, particularly from young people. These two words are "boob" and "nut." I wish some one would explain what "boobs" and "nuts" are.

What are some of the things boobs do? Then, I would be making a boob of myself by simply standing on the corner and counting my fingers over and over, or crossing the street against a red "stop-light."

Well, I have here a list of folks whom the world called silly because they did some peculiar thing. I shall mention things they did, and let you see if you can tell me their names. Who was the man who was so silly that he thought the earth was round and sailed out to prove it? Did folks then laugh at him? They thought he was a "nut."

Who was the fellow silly enough to prove that lightning was electricity, and flew a kite to prove it? Did folks laugh at him?

Who was it that thought sound could travel miles and miles through the air without wires? Did folks laugh at him? The poor "boob"!

Who was it that thought a boat could be run by steam, and made one to prove it? Did folks laugh at him?

Who were those boys who were silly enough to say we could fly, and built an airplane to prove it? Did folks laugh at them?

What is the difference between the first boobs we talked about and this list of men? Yes, the first group was queer because the men were doing silly things for no reason or good, and the last list was queer because the men were doing something so difficult that folks thought it was impossible to do it. Both groups were laughed at. But isn't it fine for us that Columbus and all the rest of those men did not stop working at their hard jobs just because some one laughed at them, or because there were lots of hard things in their way?

If you are doing something really worth while, do not stop just because some one of less vision may happen to laugh at you. Most every great discoverer and inventor has been laughed at for awhile. There are many things undiscovered in the world; there are many things to be invented yet. Get your mind out and dust it off; see what you can work out; let folks laugh if they want to. God does not trust big ideas to lazy folks or cowards. He has to wait till a Columbus or a Franklin comes along, ready to work. It may be that you are one whom God can trust with a big idea.

XXXIV.

DRIFTWOOD

1 Kings 5: 18: "Builders . . . prepared the timber and the stones to build the house."

WE had a flood out our way one time. It was rather exciting. How many of you have seen a real flood or high water? What did it look like to you? When the water had gone down, did you notice what was caught along all the fences and in the weeds and low places? Pieces of driftwood, logs, boards, branches, which had been brought there by the high water.

Is driftwood valuable? What is it good for? Just a little firewood, that is about all. Not much of it is worth using for timbers to put into a building.

Where do folks get timbers when they wish to make a building? Oh, they go to a lumber-yard and select the kind they want for their building, whether it is a house or a garage or a church. They have to pay for them, too, don't they?

Well, don't you think that making a real man or a real woman should be done as carefully as making a building? You know, a person has to last for two worlds, while a building lasts only a few years.

Don't you think that we should select the things which go into our lives with very great care? We are all given twenty-four hours each day in which to

select the materials we want to use in making a real man or a real woman of us. We must not take the things that just drift to us with the crowds, for they are driftwood and not very valuable. We must plan for and go after the materials we are going to use. We must decide what we want to make of ourselves, and then select with care all the materials we use. If we decide that we want any particular thing, like music, or oratory, or the ability of a skilled physician, or a keen lawyer, or a nurse, or a preacher, or an author, we must find out what it will take to make us that, then go after it, and go after it hard, resolving to be the finest, strongest and most useful of them all. Driftwood is one of the things that just happen along. There are some driftwood folks who are never very good for anything; but there are other folks who plan for real things and work to make them happen. Make up your mind, and then go after your place in life.

XXXV.

HERMITS

Rom. 14: 7: "For none of us liveth to himself."

MOST of you have heard of misers and hermits, haven't you? Did you ever see one or know one? Do folks like misers very well? Why not? Just because they are so selfish! There seems to be something wrong with their heads and with their hearts when they find so much pleasure in hoarding. Do you know some other selfish people besides misers? Did you ever see some one do a very selfish thing? How did you feel about it, happy or displeased? We must not get mixed up on this. We do not call people selfish for working for what they want; but we call them selfish when they neglect to help other people, or when they injure others to secure what they are after.

Now, here is a question which will take deep thinking. Did you ever do anything all by yourself? Chopped wood! Well, who made the ax? Carried home a bundle from the store! Where did the paper wrapper come from? Folks, I think you will discover, as I did, that there are not many things you have done all alone. Isn't that astonishing? Even in our thinking some one or some object starts us. We just seem to be made so that we have to work with one another and each of us is dependent upon others.

Did you count up all the people who have helped you get ready to come here to-day? Let us count some of them, beginning with your shoes. How many folks worked on those? Farmers, butchers, tanners, factory men, railway men, carpenters, lumbermen, shoe clerks. My, what a list just to get you a pair of shoes! Then, besides your shoes, there are the stockings, and the suits or dresses, hats and caps, each with a long list of folks who worked on it. It did take a lot of folks to get us all ready to-day!

Then, I had a good meal before I came. Did you? Coffee from Brazil, sugar from Cuba, fruit from California on dishes from England, cream from the dairies, and wheat from the farms, each with its long list of workers. Why, we can not half live by ourselves, can we? We all need help from some one else.

A long time ago a Bible writer put down a sentence like this, "None of us liveth to himself," and it surely is true. We need so many things. We need to be boosted along; we need encouragement; we need kindness. Since we need other folks so much, then other folks probably need us. We must not be selfish and just gather in for ourselves—a desert does that, you know. A desert keeps taking and taking water without growing anything much. People do not like deserts any too well.

We should be more like a fountain that bubbles all the time, refreshing the thirsty, cooling the heated and tired. There are so many tired and weary people in the world. Let us remember that no one liveth unto himself, and go into the world determined to do our share of its tasks.

XXXVI.

SHORT-CHANGED

Josh. 7:21: "I coveted them, and took them."

TO-DAY I am wondering how much you know about doing business. What are some of the things that are necessary in business? Yes, we need people, money, shops and merchandise. Where does a shopkeeper get all the things he has on his shelves? What does he intend to do with all these things?

What do we give a merchant in exchange for the things which we get from him? Money! We all know about money. Do you know how to make change?

If I should go into a store and buy a book for sixty cents, and give the clerk a good dollar, how much change should he return to me? But suppose he returns me only twenty cents—what then? Well, suppose I do not give him any money, but pick up the book and put it under my coat and walk out. Is that stealing?

I do not like to be short-changed. Do you? I do not like to be cheated, either. If I pay for a pound of candy, I want a pound of candy. On the other hand, if I take a pound of candy, the merchant wants money for it. A good firm will give you what you pay for, and a good customer will pay for what he gets.

Now, there are two firms which want you folks to do business with them. One offers you some very

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showy and very striking goods. It has branch houses everywhere. It can deliver at once. But when you get the things home and examine them you find that they are cheap and inferior.

The other firm does not carry flashy goods. Maybe some of the goods can not be delivered immediately; but when you come to examine them you can not find any flaws.

The price is the same at both shops. One is the shop of Evil Habits, the other is the shop of Good Habits. The price which both shops asks you to pay is your life.

Are you going to be led astray by the bright-colored things which Evil has in its shop; or are you going to show good business judgment and get your habits from the Good Habits shop? You can not cheat either shopkeeper. If you get anything evil, you will have to pay for it. If you get anything good, you must expect to pay for that too. Every good and perfect thing comes from God. Evil things come from the evil one. With which firm are you trading?

XXXVII.

MARKED TRAILS

Isa. 40: 4: "Every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain."

WHEN you have been out on our highways, how many of you have noticed the figures which are painted on the poles along the way? Hands up! Who had those numbers put on the poles? Why did they have the numbers put on? Why are they so large?

What is the difference between a highway and an ordinary road? A highway is safer, smoother, wider and better marked. Almost all the important cities have a marked highway leading into them, don't they? Travelers can find cities quite easily now by just following the numbers which have been put on the poles. This makes traveling by auto much more pleasant, doesn't it?

Have you known tourists to miss the trail even when there is a trail-marker? How could they? Yes, they failed to look, or they followed the wrong number, or some bad advice.

I heard of an important city which folks have been trying to reach for a long time. There is a marked highway leading to it, but somehow folks get off the trail—maybe by not reading the markers carefully, or maybe they have followed some poor advice at the crossroads and gone astray. This highway leads to

the city of God. Most every one hopes to get there some time, but many are far from the trail now.

The way to reach any place is to get on a trail which leads to that place and keep on the trail.

A long time ago a man by the name of Moses surveyed this trail to the city of God, and put up some markers—ten of them. You know them—Have thou no other gods; before no idol bow; nor steal; nor kill; nor lie; nor envy; nor speak unclean words; keep holy the Sabbath, and give honor to thy parents.

Moses put up these ten markers for the ancients on the highway to the city of God. When the markers began to get dim, and folks did not read them, Christ came to look the road over. He freshened up some of those old signs, gave others a new meaning, and added two more—Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.

Christ has been over the road to the city of God, folks. He knows the trail and has marked it for us, so we need not miss it if we follow the markers. Let us not take poor advice at the crossroads we come to in life and when we are tempted to break the commandments. Let us follow the trail which Christ marked till we reach the city of God.

XXXVIII.

STATIC

Rom. 8: 35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

SUPER-ZENITH, Atwater-Kent, Stromburg-Carleson, aerials, dials, static! Who knows what I am talking about? How many of you have been near enough to a radio receiving set to see how it works? Who can describe one for us? From how far can we get programs? The better the radio, the farther you can get programs. Isn't that true?

I think it is wonderful that we can get programs from hundreds of miles away. What do we call the places which send out programs? Have any of you been inside a broadcasting station? Please describe it.

Sometimes when I have been turning the dials I have gotten the most outlandish screeching. Have you? What causes that? Then, sometimes I get a popping sound. What is that? Static! Sometimes it is so strong that it drowns out all the program, but we keep on trying day after day just the same.

I see that you know considerable about radio; but I wonder if you know that God has a big broadcasting station. Yes, He has, and He is sending programs for each of us to listen in on. He wants each of us to get a good receiving set so we can hear His programs. You can make this receiving set yourself. It may be a little trouble to set up, but it will pay you to do it.

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The three dials that Christian people need for the panel are faith, hope, love; trust God, hope for the things He wants, and love Him with all our hearts. Then, we should be attached to some aerial like the church, to better connect with the programs which God is sending out.

If all these things are in good shape, we should be able to hear, unless, of course, there should be static—some trouble between us and God. Maybe we have caused a storm to come up by doing things which we should not, so we can not hear God; or it may be that some of our friends are doing something wrong which fills our tubes, our lives, and keeps us from hearing God; or it may be that our aerial is disconnected—sometimes we do not keep good connections with our church life, do we?

It is a splendid thing to get programs from Texas, California or New York. I hope you all can listen in; but wouldn't it be even a grander thing to get a message clear from God in heaven? You can make your own receiving set if you get busy on the three dials of faith, hope and love; and you can tune static out by clearing away trouble between you and God.

XXXIX.

THE SHARPSHOOTER

1 Cor. 16: 13: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

DID you ever watch a sharpshooter at work? Tell us about it! Wasn't it thrilling to watch him stand there, point his gun, and hit just anything he wanted to? How do you suppose it happened that he could shoot so well? Then, it did not just happen, did it? No, indeed, things do not just happen in this world; they are made to happen.

What are some of the things a man needs to become an expert shooter? (Steady nerve, good eye, clean gun, practice.) I think it would be great to be a sharpshooter. Don't you? To have folks say: "There he goes; he is the surest shot in all the State." Yes, I would like to be a sharpshooter; but I will tell you something else that I should like to be more than that. I should like to be a sure shot at success—to be such a good shot that I could get anything I wanted to try for. Wouldn't you?

I believe we can if we go about it the same way an expert shooter goes about his gun-shooting. But I do not believe it will ever just happen to us. I believe we will have to make it happen. We will need to get the best gun we can afford—a clean mind and a healthy, strong body. Then we will need to have

steady nerve and courage; nerve to aim and pull the trigger at the right time, courage to do right things and to keep on doing them. A sharpshooter who is afraid would fail, wouldn't he? Well, it is the folks who are afraid that fail, mostly. We will need a good eye that will see around and over obstacles which might block our shot.

Also we would need to practice much. Even a number one sharpshooter can get out of practice and miss his mark. He gets and keeps his skill by firing shot after shot, becoming surer and truer with each one. So must you get your skill, thought by thought and action by action.

It may seem slow sometimes, but strong things grow slowly. Great things remain only with those who are prepared to retain them. Let us select the thing toward which we want to aim our lives, then practice till we secure it. Make it happen!

XL.

RACES

Heb. 12: 1: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

HANDS up! All of you who have ever been in any kind of race. I really believe that everybody has his hand up! I like to race, myself! How many different kinds of races can we name? (Foot, auto, potato, motorcycle, balloon, peanut, three-legged, relay, horse, dog, sack.) All kinds of races, evidently.

There are several parts to a race, aren't there? Getting ready, starting, going, finishing. Which is the most important of these? None of them would be very important without the rest of them, would it? If we are going to race, we need to be ready; we need to start; we must go all the way as hard as we can if we want to be in at the finish.

What kind of race is a relay race? The old Greeks had a relay race which I think would have been interesting. It was run at night. The runner had a lighted torch with which he ran until he reached the next runner. He had two things to do—get to the next runner and keep the torch from going out. Wouldn't you have liked to see the Greeks run in those torch relays?

As I was thinking about this old Greek relay race, it occurred to me that life is somewhat like it. The

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folks who have lived before us have been doing the best they could to bring us a lighted torch called civilization. They have handed it to us, and we must carry it still brightly lighted to the folks who are going to live after we are gone. We have all the things which we have to-day because men and women of the past brought them to us—even the common things, like cars, phones, lights, books, schools, churches, movies, music, pictures. Maybe these people sometimes thought it would not matter. But true souls kept on until they brought these things clear down to us, and they are expecting us to pass them along. That is fair, isn't it?

You would not like to be the one, on a relay race out here some day, to whom folks could point and say: "There is the fellow who lay down on us, who put out the torch! There he is!" No, you would not like that? Neither will you like it after awhile if folks can point to you and say: "There he is! There is the fellow who would not do his part in carrying the torch of progress."

Let us be ready for this relay race of life; let us start at the very first; let us go all the way as hard as we can and give a better civilization to the folks ahead than we got from those behind. Paul had this idea when he forgot the things of the past, and said: "I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

XLI.

BUSINESS PARTNERS

2 Pet. 1: 5: "Add to your faith virtue; to your virtue knowledge" (King James Version).

HAVE you ever thought seriously what you would like to be when it comes time for you to go into the business world for yourself? I used to think about that quite a little. I used to walk along the streets reading the names on the windows and think how fine my name would look printed there or on some of those signs. Did you ever do such a foolish thing as that? Try it some time, if you have not. We are going to need you folks to take the places of some of us one of these days. Yes, we are!

I have noticed that some of the signs have two or three, or even four, names printed on them. Why is that? Then, people go into partnership with one another, do they? And when we go into their places of business we may have to deal with any one of the partners.

If you could select some person in this town, just any one, to go into business with, whom would you select? Those names sound as though you were picking all of the best ones.

There are a number of firms who are always looking for some one to learn the business—Selfishness and his partner, Dislike; Dishonesty and his partner,

Shunned; Bad Temper and his partner, No Friends; Jealousy and his partner, Unhappiness; Dishonesty with his partner, Distrust; Cowardice with his partner, Contempt. (No one else would be the partner of a coward.) These are always poor business firms to get yourself tied up with.

But there are other firms doing big business—Truthfulness with his partner, Trust—they would be glad to have you; or Honesty and his partner, Good Reputation; Fairness with Wisdom and Respect; Courtesy with his partner, Affection; Temperance and Health are partners. So are Bravery and Strength. I should like to stop to explain how each firm does business, but I can not do that. I can remind you, however, that a good man does not stay in business with a crook.

All of you are going into business with some of these firms. Look them over! See who the partners are! If they are crooks, you pull out of the business before folks link your name with theirs. We must select our habit partners as carefully as our business partners! There is one partnership that will never fail us—partnership with our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ.

XLII.

CONVICT, TRUSTY, FREEMAN

Gal. 5: 1: "Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

WHAT kind of building is it that generally is made of stone and brick, with iron bars at all the windows, a high wall around it and guards with guns pacing back and forth on the wall? Did you ever visit a prison? What is it like inside? Why do we need prisons? Oh, they make the country safer for the rest of us, do they?

What is a convict? What is a trusty? What is a citizen? It is more pleasant, then, to be a trusty than an ordinary convict, and it is more pleasant to be a citizen than a trusty.

Do convicts have to stay in prison all their lives? Oh, that is according to how much wrong they have done, is it? Well, how do people feel about a convict? How do they treat him after he is released from prison? Often not very kindly. That's so! They always seem to remember that he was once a convict, for having been in prison rather soils his reputation even after he has come out. It is very difficult for him to make a good place for himself.

Why, then, do people do wrong and get themselves into prison? (Tempted, angered, seek revenge, associates.)

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Do you realize that there are some things that will put your soul into prison—make a convict of your soul? That is why God wants us to let sin alone. If we do enough that is wrong, our souls, like the lifetermer, will never get out of prison. But we should stop even the little sins; for, although we sin and repent, and God releases us, we will have to remember always that our souls were once in prison—*convicts*. Don't you think that it would be far better to let sin entirely alone and keep our good citizenship in God's kingdom? I know some folks say that God will not punish bad souls; but don't you think that God is at least as intelligent as our Government? Don't you think He should have a prison for souls which break His laws, just as our Government has prisons for our lawbreakers? Even if it were only to keep the wicked soul away and make heaven safe for good souls, God would have His prison.

Let us not make our souls convicts by sinning, even if we might become a trusty. Let us be free citizens, respected and loved by our God,

XLIII.

NOISE

1 Kings 19: 12: "And after the fire a still small voice."

I WISH to-day that you would name all the noisy things you can think of, and the noisier, the better. (Thunder, explosions, guns, cannon-crackers, cyclones.) Then, I wish you would name all the things which move quietly. (Growing grass, stars, dynamo.)

Now I wish you would think over these two lists. Do you notice that more than half of the noisy things which you have mentioned are destructive things, while the quietly moving ones are almost all things which help us along? This would seem to prove that many important things are quiet and many great deeds are quietly done.

Do you know that some people mistake making a noise for doing something? Yes, if they make a lot of noise, they seem to think that they have done something important; but it is not always so, is it?

Which makes the more noise on the road, an empty wagon or a wagon that is loaded? Which is the more dangerous, the noisy thunder or the quiet lightning? Which motor can do the better work, a noisy, rattling one or a quiet one?

There are some quiet places in our lives which are more important than the noisy ones—those times when we are alone, away from our friends and pals, or when

we are dreaming about the things we want to be, or want to do, or want to have. These are the times that are going to be either helpful or dangerous to us. What is in these dreams, splendid things or little, sneaking things? They will crop out in deeds and manners after awhile. Then, they will be where folks can see them. Do we want people to know what we have been dreaming about when we have been alone?

Then, there are those times when we must work alone. If we work well, such times are good for us. All inventors, all great musicians, all great lawyers, all great doctors, preachers and teachers, have worked much alone. But beware of poor work when alone, for thieves, bootleggers, counterfeiterers, embezzlers, have worked alone also, but theirs was the wrong kind of work.

Your quiet times are largely the times which will advance you or set you back. They are your test-times. So, here is a good rule to go by: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

XLIV.

THE DRUGSTORE

John 3: 15: "That whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life."

WERE you ever the least bit sick? Were you ever seriously ill? Are most folks sick at some time or other? What makes people get sick, anyhow? Oh, they get sick by eating things they should not eat, by being careless, by doing things they should not do, or by coming into contact with some one else who is sick! Yes, that's true. Foolish things to do, aren't they? But we seem to do them and keep on getting sick.

What are some of the things we depend upon to aid us in getting well? (Doctors, nurses, medicine, hospitals, drugstores.)

Well, suppose you are very sick. You send for the doctor, and he comes up and walks past your house. Will that cure you?

Well, then, suppose he comes in and writes you a prescription; will that cure you? Then, suppose you send to the drugstore and get the medicine; will that cure you, if you do no more? No, not unless you take the medicine and follow the advice the doctor has given. If you refuse to take it, or neglect to take it, or forget to take it, you will have to keep the pain till it wears you out or you wear it out.

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How does the doctor know what to give you? Oh, he has studied and knows what causes the pain and what will take it away! It is good sense to follow his advice, because he knows.

Folks, our characters get sick just the same way our bodies get sick. We may become careless, we may do things that are wrong, we may feed our minds on unclean books and stories, we may go to places where we catch soul diseases from other people and our lives may become very unhappy. But Christ is the great physician for our souls, our characters. He has given us a prescription which will cure soul diseases, but we must use our good sense. We must not think that, just because there is a church near by, or because we have a Bible in the house, we are going to be cured. No! We must read Christ's directions carefully and follow them. No one else can do it for us and do us any good, any more than he can take our medicine for us and cure us.

And, if we forget, or if we neglect the remedy, it can not cure our heartaches, either. They will keep on till they wear us out. Christ said that any one who trusts Him and follows Him will have eternal life. Are you following His prescription as He has it written—clean living, right-doing, proper companions? Christ is our great and our only soul physician.

XLV.

“WAKE UP”

Judg. 5: 12: “Arise, Barak.”

WHEN you are called in the morning, do you always get up immediately? Now, be honest! Or does it happen about like this? Mother calls “Charles!” Charles grunts a little, but does not move much. Mother calls again: “Charles! Oh, Charles! Time to get up!” This time Charles rolls over and drops his shoe on the floor so that mother will be still, but he does not get up.

Presently mother calls again very sharply, “*Charles!*” and starts up the stairs. Then Charles hops out in a hurry and hustles into his clothes. That is the way I have known it to happen at our house. Why does mother insist upon our getting up? Is it not because there are things to be done every day and each has his own responsibilities?

Now, here is a very serious thing. Suppose some day, as it has happened in some homes, that some one calls and calls, but can not waken the sleeper; he goes closer to the bed and tries to rouse the sleeper, but nothing he can do causes the slightest stir; he listens for the heartbeats, but discovers they have stopped. What has happened? What do we do with folks after they are dead? Yes, we take them to the cemetery. But it is not because we do not love them, or

because they are not dear to us, that we take them away; it is because their bodies are no longer alive.

Do you know I think sometimes that God is dealing with our spirits in the same way? He comes and He calls to waken us and send us about the things which need to be done. Some spirits waken easily, some it is more difficult to waken, but He tries ever so many ways to waken them. By and by He is going to come closer to some souls and shake them hard. Then, if He can not waken them, He is going to examine their hearts, and, if He finds none of His life there, He is going to do just as we do. He is going to take that soul out to His cemetery and leave it there. He will do this, not because He does not love that soul, or because it was not dear to Him, but because there is no life in the heart.

The soul which hears God's voice and answers will never die. Are you listening to God's call to be clean and true and active? I hope you are, and I hope you answer Him: "I am ready, Lord Jesus. What do you want me to do?"

XLVI.

FLAT TIRES

Prov. 2: 21: "For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it."

I HEARD a car going down the street the other day which sounded something like this: Thump—thump—thump—thump! What was the matter with it? Are flat tires desirable? Not even *one* little flat tire? Why not? There are three other good ones! A flat tire makes a car harder to control and makes it run crooked because it was intended that a car should run on four good tires.

What makes tires go flat? Oh, because they have picked up something along the way which has broken through the inner tube!

Well, if some one wants to sell you a car that is all right *except* one wheel which is flat—rim, tire and everything—would you want the car? No. When you get a car, you want all four wheels good.

I have discovered that the more there is wrong with a car, the cheaper it can be bought, and that some cars have so much wrong with them that they are good only for the junk-pile. This is true of other things besides cars. A pair of damaged shoes is cheaper than a pair that is not damaged. Cloth that is soiled is cheaper than the same cloth if it is not soiled. Even an apple with a rotten place in it is cheaper than one

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that is sound. We somehow want the things we possess to be in the best possible condition, don't we?

Well, do you know we should feel the same way about folks, but so often we do not. We feel that they can be damaged or soiled a little without its making any difference. God does not feel that way, though. He feels about folks the same way as we feel about flat tires on a car. We think He should be satisfied if we offer Him a life even if it is running only on three good wheels, like a car with a puncture. It may have gotten punctured by lying, or stealing, or uncleanness, but we seem to think that God should be glad to get it anyhow, so we do not even try to get it repaired.

God does not want flat-tired folks, not even with one flat tire, because they run crooked. They make the highways of life more difficult to drive on. Even if there is only one little thing wrong with them, they are cheaper than they would be if it were right.

If you have a flat tire in your life, folks will hear it as we hear the flat thump of a car. Do not think you can hide it. If you are lying, or stealing, or being impure, you need repairs. Do not go thump, thump through life, making a crooked track. God needs sound lives—not cracked or broken ones.

XLVII.

THE SPARK

John 6: 63: "It is the Spirit that giveth life."

WHAT sort of contrivance is it that goes "Honk! honk!"? How many different makes of cars can we name? What are some of the things we want to know about a car before we buy it?

We hear a great deal about the horse-power of a car. What is the horse-power? What are the two classes of cars, as far as securing a license is concerned? Business and pleasure, then!

One time I started for a ride and had gone several miles in fine style, but all of a sudden the car stopped and refused to start, though I tinkered and tinkered with it. Finally I had to give up and phone for help. What do you suppose was wrong with that car? I will tell you. The high-tension wire was disconnected. As soon as they hooked up that spark, the car went all right. It is all right to rate cars by their horse-power, but I want to testify that all the horse-power in the world will not make a car start itself without the sparks being connected. Power does no good unless it is applied.

We do not mind pushing a car a little way once in awhile. We are always grateful to be towed in when something goes wrong. But a car which always has to be pushed or towed is not much account, no

matter how fine it looks. It must be able to run on its own power before it is of use.

While pleasure cars and trucks both count on their horse-power, let us remember also that the business and pleasure of the world count on man-power. There are all kinds of people, just as there are all kinds of cars; but, no matter how fine people may be in appearance, they can not do much that is worth while without being connected with the divine spark. We do not mind pulling folks along for awhile; we do not mind helping them up a hill now and then; but a person who has to be pushed and pulled all the time is not worth any more to the world than a car which has to be towed all the time.

One of the first things to look for when life is not moving along well is that spark of life which we get from God. If you are sure that everything is connected between you and God, then take on a good supply of pep, polish your life so it will be clean and pure, and you are bound to climb any and all grades.

XLVIII.

WRECKS

John 3: 17: "For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him."

PEOPLE do not like to talk about unpleasant things. They do not like to see unpleasant things. They like to be happy. But there is one thing of which there is so much to-day that I am going to risk talking about it anyway. I have in mind accidents and wrecks.

There is hardly a day that passes in which there is not some accident or wreck, is there? Do accidents and wrecks just happen, or is some one generally to blame for them? What are some of the most common reasons for accidents and wrecks? (Carelessness, recklessness, ignorance.) It does not make much difference what the cause of a wreck is, if things are broken up they are broken up, aren't they? If I had my arm broken in a wreck, my arm wouldn't get well any faster whether the wreck was caused by carelessness or by ignorance, would it? Even if the person who caused the wreck were sorry, that would not make my arm heal any faster, would it? Of course, I might not feel as angry if they were sorry, but my arm would hurt just as long.

What would you suggest as a cure for wrecks? If every person did the right thing, then there would be

fewer wrecks? But before he can do the right thing he must learn what is the right thing to do!

There are people who are wrecks, whose lives have been all smashed to pieces because some one has been careless or reckless or ignorant. It may be that they are to blame, or it may be that some one else is to blame, but it is our business to help prevent these wrecks.

Christ came to teach us how to run this old earth without wrecking it. He was with God in making it; He should know how to run it. Don't you think so? He wants to show us how to run our lives so that we will not make a wreck of them. He does not want us to be careless or reckless or just plain ignorant. He wants us to learn to use them rightly, for He realizes that, when once a life is broken or scarred, it can never be repaired so that the mark will not show.

Will you let Him teach you how to run your life so that you will never become a wreck yourself or injure another life? It just seems to me that I would never get over it if I killed any one with my car or if I killed a soul by careless living. Christ knows the safe way to drive; let us learn of Him!

XLIX.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1 Sam. 16: 7: "But Jehovah looketh on the heart."

ON rainy, gloomy days I have a favorite pastime. I have a box of old photographs which I get out and look through, and it never fails to cheer me. You have looked at old photographs, haven't you? Aren't some of them funny, with the big hats hiking up one side of the ladies' heads, and whiskers like so much hay growing on the faces of the men? Remember the funny-fitting coats and ties, and dresses with queer-shaped waists and sleeves? They certainly are funny to look at; no doubt about that at all!

You have had your picture taken, haven't you? Do you remember how awful the first proofs looked with blotches on your face and maybe shadows where they didn't belong? Why are all those wrinkles and blotches in the proofs? Because the lenses of the camera are so strong that they disclose these blotches even though our eyes can not see them. Well, aren't you glad that photographers retouch pictures and take all the blotches out?

We look pretty good to ourselves, even if the old camera does find blotches and things wrong with us, and we do not want to give our friends a picture showing ugly spots, even if they are under our skin ready to break out!

God has a camera with a strong lens, stronger than any the photographer has. He is taking pictures with this camera too. God is not taking pictures of our faces, or of our clothing; He is taking pictures of our hearts, our motives, our purposes. Whatever is there, His camera is strong enough to find, whether our friends can see it or not. He does not retouch the pictures, however. He puts them away as they are, in order to show them to you some day. You will sit down with Him and look over these pictures He has of your heart. If they show your heart to be clean, you will be glad; but, if they show your heart to be unclean, you will not be happy, for God wants only clean-hearted folks to be with Him.

How does your heart look to God? He is all kindness and patience and justice, love and purity. If God's camera in the last day should show your heart to be blotched by stinginess and ugliness, by tempers and wickedness, what is going to be done? He can not then retouch the pictures. But He can and will retouch your life now, if you want Him to. He will help you make your heart right. Then your picture will be different.

God knows our hearts, our secrets, our desires; we can not hide them from Him. Is your heart one that looks clean and pure in the sight of God?

L.

PARKS AND GARDENS

Heb. 12: 2: "Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

WE think we have one of the best towns in the country, don't we? We like to show it off to visitors, too; it always makes us feel good when the visitors praise our town! Did you ever show any one our parks and gardens? We are very proud of them, and we should be!

Have you noticed that there are men working around in these parks all the time? What are some of the things they are doing? (Mowing grass, cutting weeds, trimming trees, setting out flowers, watering shrubs, picking up trash.) How long would we have nice parks if they did not keep at this? What would we have instead? What is the official title for men who work in gardens?

What is the difference between a gardener and the landscape gardener? Oh, a landscape gardener is the one who has charge of the whole thing. He knows how to plan it because he has studied plants and soil and climate. It is because he puts the plants and flowers where they will do the best that we have such splendid parks and gardens.

Well, folks, there is something more interesting than parks which I like to show the visitors who come to our town. That something else is you—you folks

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who are here before me—and it makes me mighty proud when the visitors praise you too. I have been watching you as you have been fitting yourselves into God's world garden. Some of you are just as busy as are the men working out in the parks—busy every day keeping yourself in trim by cutting off every little sap-sucking sprout that starts on your character. You keep the trash picked out of your surroundings. You have been busy setting out the beautiful things in thought, word and deed. You have evidently been following the suggestions of the great landscape gardener of the world, Jesus Christ. You have not been lazy or careless, letting yourself become like a neglected park—full of trash and weeds. I have seen some folks living lazy lives like that. But, hear me! We do not brag about our weed patches, neither do we show visitors our weed-patch folks.

I hope you will continue to plan your life with the great Landscape Gardener. He knows the world; He knows folks; He knows God. I hope I may always be able to say to visitors concerning each one of you: "There is a person with a well-kept life."

LI.

WELLS AND CISTERNS

Isa. 12: 3: "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

I OFTEN hear things, clever things, which make me wonder just what the folks who said them had in mind. Here is one of them: "You will never miss the water till the well runs dry." What is the meaning of that?

What is the difference between a well and a cistern? Which would be the more likely to go dry, a well or a cistern? What are some of the things well water is used for? (Drink, wash, make things grow.)

Did you ever think how terrible it would be if all the wells would go dry at the same time? If we could not get any water, what would we do?

Water, then, is a valuable thing. People do not like to live in a place where there is no water. In order to have a good well, what must we do? Yes, dig down until we get a supply, and then keep dirt from washing into it.

A long, long time ago, people were asking and wondering what God did for folks. So God sent Christ down here to try to explain to them some things about God. One of the things Christ said was this: "I am the living water." I got to wondering about that idea. How could it be true? Then I discovered the

answer. I discovered that God wants to clean up our lives, our hearts, our brains, the unclean words in our speech. That is what water does, isn't it?

Then, God's plan is that we may have means to refresh ourselves when we get tired from our work or our play; to cool ourselves when we get too hot, and to warm ourselves when we get too cold. Water does those things, too, doesn't it?

God wants to help the world to grow fine, strong, wholesome people. Water helps things to grow, does it not?

I wonder how we would feel if all of a sudden God should take all of the Christian things from the world—churches, schools, hospitals, peace, love, kindness. There are many good things in the world, but we must not substitute them for God, any more than we should substitute other things for water. Perfume is a good thing, but if you tried to clean your face in pure perfume every day you would only make your face sore. If you were to drink perfume, it would make you ill. If you were to spray the garden with perfume, it would kill the grass—not because perfume is “no good,” but because such things are not done with perfume, but with water.

That is much the way it is with Christ and religion. Religion is the thing with which God has provided us that we may cleanse our lives and refresh and strengthen ourselves. Let us not try substitutes, nor let the well become filled with dirt.

LII.

THE WIND

1 Cor. 13: 12: "For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face."

DO you like riddles? I wonder if we could have two good ones right now. Just two! I wish we had time to give some more, but I want to introduce you to the rest of the family. You know, Riddle has three brothers! Do you know their names? Think hard, now; there are three of them! (Puzzle, Riddle, Mystery, Secret.)

What is a puzzle? Do you like to work puzzles?

The next brother is more difficult to explain. What is a mystery? Oh, a thing that we know *that* it is, but we do not understand the how of it.

The third brother is much easier to explain. What is a secret? Which of these four brothers (Riddle, Puzzle, Mystery and Secret) do you like best? They all are rather popular.

I believe I like Secret best. Most folks have secrets. Sometimes they tell them to their best friends, and sometimes they keep them to themselves. That depends upon how important the secret is. Now, secrets are different from riddles and mysteries and puzzles, because, if you study hard enough and are a good enough thinker, you can work out mysteries, puzzles and riddles. But the only way you can be sure of

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knowing a secret is for the owner of that secret to tell you.


Now, folks, listen! God has riddles in religion. God has puzzles in religion. God has mysteries in religion. If you want to study hard enough, and use as much patience as you use with other puzzles, you can work these out.

But God also has secrets in religion. Some are so important that He keeps them absolutely to Himself; but some He keeps only until He finds a real good friend to whom He can tell them. That is fair enough, isn't it?

Are you going to be one of God's friends—one He can trust?

There are mysteries all about us—the wind, for example. We see treetops moved by the wind. We feel the wind on our faces. But the wind is partly a secret and partly a mystery. We do not know from where it comes and we do not know where it goes. We can not see it, but we know that it is real, because we see what it does. Many, many things about it are God's secret.

Now, Jesus said that religion is much like the wind. We see what it is doing in the world. We see it moving lives. We can not explain everything about it, but it is real just the same—just as real as the wind. There are some things about religion that are among God's great secrets which, some day, He will explain to those who want to be real true friends of His.


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